

the department to route mail over the Canadian National Railways, so that the public will not be at any disadvantage in regard to service—that is in the delivery of the mail to them—and where it will not cost the Post Office Department any more to route the mail over the Canadian National than over the Canadian Pacific Railway, I think we might well advise the Post Office Department that such steps should be taken, and that they should so route the mail over the Canadian National that they would obtain perhaps an advantage in that respect. Finding themselves, as they do at the present time, at a disadvantage—

Mr. CHURCH: Is it not the function of the railway commission, of its own volition, to regulate any undue and unjust discrimination with regard to transportation companies that use the mails? I understand the railway commission of its own volition can make rules and regulations to prevent any undue or unjust discrimination.

Mr. STEWART (Humboldt): In reply to my hon. friend, I have never heard of the railway commission taking any action in this regard and I also point out to him that I think the word used in the resolution of the hon. member for Dauphin, (Mr. Ward) was unwisely chosen. I think that the word "discrimination" does not perhaps best suit the situation which we are now facing. I would not for one moment have it supposed that I think the Post Office Department are showing discrimination in the allotment of these mails. I was stating that where the Post Office Department could change the routing of their mails they should do so, and I think they should be so advised by this House. Hon. members might wonder why this House should need to offer to the Post Office Department any advice in that regard. Perhaps the Postmaster General (Mr. Murphy), who is in his seat just now, will think it is presumption on the part of any member on this side of the House to offer his department any advice in that regard; but I want to make it perfectly plain why I think the House might offer them advice without being presumptuous. There is no member in this House who has a greater respect for the efficiency of the Post Office Department than I have. I have had the experience of living out in the frontier of our Dominion for a considerable portion of my life, where perhaps we see the efficiency of the Post Office Department, and realize the efficiency with which it serves us better than those who live in the larger urban centres of the Dominion, where they have delivery many times a day,

just as a natural routine of business. The Post Office Department is efficient without doubt. It has, I believe, built up its record for efficiency by very definite business principles and business lines of conduct. It is because in my contact with the officers of that department I have been impressed with their adherence to very strict business principles, and business conduct, in the administration of their affairs, that I offer this suggestion. The matter which has been referred to in the resolution as discrimination is, I think, the simple growth of the affairs in our national history, rather than discrimination.

The Canadian Pacific Railway was the first railway to cover our country from one end to the other. Without a doubt it gave the best service to the majority of the people of Canada for many years, and naturally, if the officials of the Post Office Department were going to use the most efficient and economical means of reaching the great majority of our people, they would be forced to use the Canadian Pacific. Therefore, naturally, they used those lines and their branches for the carriage of mails, and the Canadian Pacific became a part of the postal system. A matter that must not be overlooked in this regard is the training of sorting clerks in the post office. They have to make the sorting of mails a specialized business. After the routing of mails on one system has been carefully built up, to change it to another cannot be done at a moment's notice and it is not done without thought being taken as to the result. It completely throws out the usefulness of clerks who are trained to know the post offices along certain lines, and who have to learn all over again the post offices on another line. To do this on a big scale means serious disruption of the postal service of the Dominion.

In the past few years, at least the majority of hon. members will admit that our Canadian National railway system in its unified form is reaching and giving service to many centres of this Dominion, as well as to the farming sections, that the units of which it is built up did not do prior to their union into a national system. The Canadian National Railways are now in a position to compete successfully in many respects with the Canadian Pacific and they can compete with the Canadian Pacific in giving service in the carriage of mails. The matter still remains, though, of changing in some sections from one to the other, and we should not too severely criticize our Post Office Department for hesitating to take the action that would be necessary to change the carriage of mails